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United States of America

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

JULIO CHAVEZ-LICATERO,
DENNISE CASTRO-LOPEZ,
DESTANEY WALKER, and
BRYAN SAHAGUN,

Defendants.

CASE NO. 1:20-CR-00062-JLT-SKO

STIPULATION REGARDING EXCLUDABLE
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;
ORDER

DATE: March 30, 2022
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
COURT: Hon. Sheila K. Oberto

On May 13, 2020, this Court issued General Order 618, which suspends all jury trials in the Eastern District of California until further notice. This General Order was entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19. Further, pursuant to General Order 614, 620, 624, 628, and 630 and the CARES Act, this Court's declaration of judicial emergency under 18 U.S.C. § 3174, and the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council's Order of April 16, 2020, continuing this Court's judicial emergency, this Court has allowed district judges to continue all criminal matters to a date after May 1, 2020.¹

¹ A judge "may order case-by-case exceptions" at the discretion of that judge "or upon the request of counsel, after consultation with counsel and the Clerk of the Court to the extent such an order will impact court staff and operations." General Order 618, ¶ 7 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2020).

Although the General Order addresses the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision “counteract[s] substantive openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record findings” in a particular case. *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. And moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a judge ordering an end-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally or in writing”).

Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, 618, and 620 and the subsequent declaration of judicial emergency require specific supplementation. Ends-of-justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of his findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that the ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

The General Orders and declaration of judicial emergency exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics, natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-

justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4).² If continued, this Court should designate a new date for the status conference. *United States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any pretrial continuance must be “specifically limited in time”).

STIPULATION

Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and through defendant’s counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

1. By previous order, this matter was set for status on March 30, 2022.

2. By this stipulation, defendant and government now move to continue the status conference until June 1, 2022, and to exclude time between March 30, 2022, and June 1, 2022, under Local Code T4.

3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

a) The government has represented that initial discovery in this case has been provided. The government is in the process of determining if additional discovery needs to be produced and, if so, making it available to the defense.

b) Certain discovery was not provided to current counsel for defendant Chavez in error. The government will provide this discovery which is believed to be cellphone downloads by March 31, 2022.

c) Counsel for defendant’s desire additional time to review discovery, conduct investigation, and engage in plea negotiations.

d) Counsel for defendants believes\ that failure to grant the above-requested continuance would deny him/her the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due diligence.

e) The government agrees with the continuance request and does not object to the continuance.

² The parties note that General Order 612 acknowledges that a district judge may make “additional findings to support the exclusion” at the judge’s discretion. General Order 612, ¶ 5 (E.D. Cal. March 18, 2020).

f) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in a trial within the original date prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

g) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161, et seq., within which trial must commence, the time period of March 30, 2022 to June 1, 2022, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code T4] because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis of the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.

4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial must commence.

IT IS SO STIPULATED.

Dated: March 24, 2022

PHILLIP A. TALBERT
United States Attorney

/s/ LAUREL J. MONTOYA
LAUREL J. MONTOYA
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: March 24, 2022

/s/ MARC DAYS
MARC DAYS
Counsel for Defendant
JULIO CHAVEZ-LUCATERO

Dated: March 24, 2022

/s/ KEVIN P. ROONEY
KEVIN P. ROONEY
Counsel for Defendant
DENNISE CASTRO-LOPEZ

Dated: March 24, 2022

/s/ ANTHONY P. CAPOZZI
ANTHONY P. CAPOZZI
Counsel for Defendant
DESTANEY WALKER

1 Dated: March 24, 2022

/s/ MONICA BERMUDEZ
MONICA BERMUDEZ
Counsel for Defendant
BRYAN SAHAGUN

5 **ORDER**

7 IT IS SO ORDERED.

11 DATED: 3/25/2022

/s/ *Sheila K. Oberto*

THE HONORABLE SHEILA K. OBERTO
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE